

## Doula Pride -Practice Guide – V1- 2024



Our Collective Goal in **Doula Pride** is to address social isolation and serious illness care to provide LGBTQ+ Social Supportive Care.

### Key Definitions:

- **Serious Illness** - Serious illness is a health condition that carries a high risk of mortality and either negatively impacts a person’s daily functioning and/or quality of life or excessively strains caregivers.
- **LGBTQ+ Contexts** – diversity, autonomy, social networks, laws, discrimination, geography, proximity to available support.
- **Doula Informed Care** – Non-Medical – Socially Supported Care based on the philosophy of compassionate care and the historical role of doulas.



## Serious Illness Care – Some Essentials in your Practice

- Please wear a mask
- Keep initial visits short even if very positive may take a lot of energy, pace yourself.
- Energy and attention may be limited.
- Mobility and physical activity may change avoid ableism.
- Certain times of day may be better.
- Feelings of sadness, anger, helplessness, grief, loss arise – allow for negative feelings (“I’m Listening”).
- Offer presence.
- Listening without judgement.
- Ask permissions (“may I ask you a question?”), (“may I share a resource?”)
- Offer tangible assistance.
- Maintain your own balance – provide what you are only comfortable with providing.
- Patience and time are supportive – there is no urgency.
- If an urgent issue arises, contact 911.
- Remember social support is of great benefit.
- Keep all information protected, confidential and private.



## **Cultivating the Doula Heart – Doula Essentials** (Arnoldy, Francesca)

Doula Essentials – Essentials of Compassionate Care – Section 1 (p. 3)

- 1. D – Dedication to Presence**
- 2. O – Open-Mindedness**
- 3. U – Understanding with Compassion**
- 4. L – Listening Intently**
- 5. A – Allaying Distress**

### **Doula Being:**

- Emotion Ally
- Meeting people where they are
- Turning toward suffering
- Maintaining a beginner's mind
- Companionship and serving
- Intentional presence
- Compassion
- Non-judgement
- Non-agenda
- Unconditional positive regard



## Foundations of the Doula Informed Care Practices

Make Sure You (Arthur, A.):

- Focus on the person in your care.
- Practice non-judgmental support.
- Listen and be still
- Understand that discrimination takes a toll.
- Spend time with the client to identify specific needs.
- Coordinate caregiving with helpful volunteers, family/kin members, and supportive friends.
- Provide appropriate community resources.
- Help clients self-advocate.
- Provide an atmosphere of dignity and love.
- Affirm the identities of the people you serve.
- Honor and help serve your dying person's wishes.
- Advocate and Connect wished a death aligned with what the client wants.



## Centering Practices –

Before a visit, prepare Intention

Hand on Your Heart - A breathing exercise that offers compassion for self and others

### GRACE MODEL (Halifax, et al.) to Guide your Visit

- **G – Gathering Attention:** Gather your attention. Pause, breath in, give yourself time to get grounded by gathering your attention. Invite yourself to be present and embodied, getting grounded, by sensing into a place of stability in your body.

You can focus your attention on the breath, for example, or on a neutral part of the body, like the soles of your feet or your hands as they rest on each other. You can use this moment of grounding to interrupt your assumptions and expectations.

- **R – Recalling Intention:** Recall your intention. Remember what your service is really about (Doula Pride): to relieve the individual’s suffering and to act with integrity and to preserve the integrity. Recall the felt-sense of why you have chosen to relieve the suffering of others and to serve in this way. This “touch in” can happen in a moment. Your motivation keeps you on track, morally grounded, and connected to person, Doula Pride and to your highest values.

- **A – Attuning to Self/Other:** Attune by checking in with yourself, then the patient: First notice what’s going on in your own mind and body.

Then sense into the experience; this includes the observation of what the person is saying or may wish to be quiet, especially emotional cues: voice tone, body language. Sense without judgement. This is an active process of inquiry, first involving yourself, then the person.

- **C – Considering:** Consider what is going on by observing the present moment and letting insights arise. As the encounter unfolds, watch for insights: What are you sensing, seeing, learning? What will really serve here?

Draw on your Doula Pride knowledge, and experience, and at the same time, be open to seeing things in a fresh way. The insights you have may fall outside of a category. Don’t jump to conclusions too quickly.

- **E – Engaging & Ending:** Engage, enact ethically, and end: allow for emergence of the next step.

Compassionate action emerges from the sense of openness, connectedness, and discernment you have created. This action might be a recommendation, an open question about values, or even a proposal for how to spend the remaining time with this person.

You co-create with the patient a dynamic, morally grounded situation, characterized by mutuality, trust, and consistent with your values and ethics; you draw on your expertise/experience, intuition, and insight, and you look for common ground consistent with your values and supportive of mutual integrity.

Then end. Mark the end, release, let go, breathe out. Explicitly recognize, internally, when the encounter is over; release with an exhale. While the next step might be more than you expected would be possible or disappointingly small, notice that, acknowledge your work here. Without acknowledging your own work, it will be difficult to let go of this encounter and move on.

**LGBTQ+ Community Resources:** Are available to you on the Website and Facebook Sharing Space.

- Ongoing sharing and mentorship is available to you.
- Raeann will check in weekly for sharing your visiting schedule and time.
- Check in with Dina and Raeann often and as needed.



